

Local Elon alumni carry on spirit of service

Caitlin O'Donnell
Reporter

Last Saturday afternoon, a group of 30 Elon alumni from the Triangle Alumni Chapter gathered to collect boxes of food donated to the food bank in an effort to feed the hungry at the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

"With this event, we want to give back to the community through our contributions and our time however we can and become re-engaged with Elon and our local alumni," said Lisa Johnston Smithdeal, '83 Elon University alumna and president of the Triangle Chapter.

This is not the first time the Triangle Chapter has participated in local volunteer events. Each year, all regional chapters are asked to take part in the October "Make a Difference" month of service.

"They can choose a service project specific to their area or one that benefits a national campaign," said Lauren Kelly, coordinator of alumni chapters.

Smithdeal said she believes it is important to give back to the community throughout the year as well. The chapter

organizes teams for the Komen Race for the Cure every spring and is an official sponsor of the Triangle Spokes Group, along with the Salvation Army, which provides bicycles for needy families.

"Especially in these trying times, where so many people are suffering with job loss and cutbacks, every little bit makes a difference in someone else's life," she said.

With a variety of service projects, the Triangle Chapter seeks to provide opportunities for all its alumni to volunteer in projects that suit their personalities, interests and schedules.

"Some alumni are only interested in sporting events, others want to have networking and/or social gatherings, while some alumni want to become more involved with community service," Smithdeal said. "We try to reach out to all alumni so they can continue to live a life that is bigger than themselves."

Through the Triangle Chapter's annual volunteer events, alumni hope to continue what they first experienced during their time at Elon.

"During their undergraduate years, students spend a great deal of time volunteering in the community, so they honor that Elon spirit of service as they participate in chapter service events," Kelly said.

Elon has been recognized nationally for its efforts in encouraging students to think beyond themselves and give back to their community and others around them.

"We want to keep these ideas going after graduation because the lessons we learned at Elon will always be a part of us," Smithdeal said.

Triangle members and Elon alumni Megan Livengood, ('03), and Katie Hendrick, ('04), only had positive things to say about their time as students at Elon.

"We loved it," Livengood said. "Students certainly have many challenging and fun experiences ahead of them."

For Smithdeal, volunteering for these events is more than just giving up her time. She said she has been repeatedly blessed by the experiences she has shared with the Triangle Chapter.

Working at the Triangle Spokes Group with her



CAITLIN O'DONNELL | Photographer
Katie Hendrick, left, a 2004 graduate, and 2003 graduate Megan Livengood, right, help out at the Triangle Alumni Food Bank event.

daughter last December, Smithdeal was amazed at the excitement a simple bicycle could bring a child.

"My daughter talked to me about the many ways to

volunteer for community service events on campus," Smithdeal said. "She was impressed that the alumni keep up those ideals of giving back long after graduation."

NASCAR aims to drive missing alumnus into national spotlight

Danielle Hatch
Reporter

Almost two years ago, the Elon community was shaken by the disappearance of 2007 alumnus Kyle Fleischmann. Now, the Kyle Fleischmann Foundation, along with the brothers of Elon's the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity, are spreading the word about his disappearance to a national audience at this weekend's NASCAR Dollar General 300.

Fleischmann disappeared after a night out in uptown Charlotte on Nov. 9, 2007. He was last seen leaving Fuel Pizza around 2:20 a.m., and there has yet to be any conclusive evidence surrounding his current whereabouts.

To promote awareness of the young alumnus' disappearance, the Kyle Fleischmann Foundation will sponsor a vehicle at the upcoming Charlotte NASCAR weekend.

"It's going to create a lot of awareness," said senior and Kappa Alpha Order President Jeff Criswell. "It's not so much a money-raising event as it is an opportunity to get Fleischmann's case into the public eye."

Elon graduate and close friend of Fleischmann, Garrett Turner, worked alongside his brother, Parker Turner, to make this event possible. The two have previously sponsored NASCAR vehicles for their IT and Telecommunications company, Liberty Port. When they sponsored a car at the Coca-Cola 400 in Daytona, Fla., in July, they received an overwhelming response.

"The first day we announced that we were sponsoring the race, our Web site got 1,000 hits," Garret said. "The day before the race, our Web site got 10,000 hits."

After realizing the amount of positive exposure they could receive, Liberty Port teamed up with Rick Ware Racing to sponsor a vehicle for Fleischmann. The vehicle, No. 31 Rick Ware Racing Nationwide series car, will have Fleischmann's picture and the Kyle Fleischmann Foundation's logo on the side, as well as the hotline's number on the hood.

"We have always been adamant about finding Kyle, and when we decided to do the Charlotte race, we just put two and two together," Turner said.

The Dollar General 300 will be this Friday at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, N.C. The Kyle Fleischmann Foundation will receive national exposure from networks such as CNN, ABC and Fox, and will reach millions of people when the race is aired on ESPN2.

"The national press is really coming together to generate more interest about a story that is essentially two years old," Turner said. "We are trying to keep Kyle in the spotlight. He hasn't gone away."

Friends and family of Fleischmann urge students to attend the event, even if they did not personally know Kyle.

"This could happen to anyone and we're just trying to spread the word," Criswell said. "Any kind of help any student could give would mean a lot to a lot of people."



Kyle Fleischmann
Missing 2007
Elon Alumnus

Neuroscience minor probes into Elon's science department

Camille DeMere
Multimedia Editor

Think fast. Focusing on neuroscience during their college career is the newest way for pre-medical and science students to prepare for graduate school. For the first time, this fall Elon is offering a minor in the field, which focuses on the brain and the nervous system.

In recent years, it has become apparent that graduate school means neuroscience classes. Alumni have reported back from graduate programs in psychology and physical therapy saying no matter what the end goal is, neuroscience plays a part in medical school.

The decision to add the minor came after two years of planning and involvement from many science departments that realized they had members to benefit and professors with passion for the concentration.

The minor's course load draws from fields like biology, psychology, computer science, exercise sports science and chemistry.

"This is beyond traditional science," said Amy Overman, assistant professor of psychology. "We all have a brain. Neuroscience is the underpinnings of all of our lives."

Hall said a few professors had been interested in starting the minor, but the university waited until it was sure the minor would be useful.

It was clear last fall that students were ready for neuroscience to be recognized as a defined course of study. More than 130 students attended a daylong neuroscience workshop that a group of professors and students planned in October. Fifty percent of those who answered a poll after the presentations showed interest in the minor.

Though the minor requires 24 semester hours, most students on the track said fitting in the credits is not difficult.

Many, like senior Sarah



JUSTINE SCHULERUD | Staff Photographer
Junior Ali Bower discusses brain wave images in a student workshop. Electronic signals from her brain can be collected through the cap on her head and the resulting information is displayed on screen.

Foushee, were preparing for the minor without even meaning to. She began her freshman year with a biology minor. Those classes, combined with exercise sports science classes required for her major and a summer class, put her in line.

"I signed up as soon as it was available," she said.

Senior Olivia Ackerman had little direction for her career path until taking the Biological Basis of Behavior class her sophomore year. The course emphasized neuroscience and inspired Ackerman to consider specializing in the field.

"Spending time in Dr. Overman's Biological Basis of Behavior class showed me what I wanted to go into," she said. "There isn't exactly a neuroscience field, but I want to focus on it in my profession."

The class's subject matter has stayed the same, but it was renamed Behavioral Neuroscience this year to reflect the university's new emphasis on neuroscience.

So far, 22 students have declared the minor, and Hall said he thinks the number will climb after pre-registration at the end of the semester.

Junior Sean Glynn is one of those waiting to make a decision. As a double-major in communications and psychology, the time to earn credits is dwindling, but his desire to expand his reach is not.

Glynn said the minor

would be convenient because he's already met many of the requirements and it also relates to his life outside of school.

"I don't actually plan for my career to use my psychology major," he said. "I plan to go into communications. But I have family members who have mental disorders and I work with Special Olympics, so it has to do with things that are important to me."

The minor is attracting students mainly from the science department but is open to everyone.

"The questions we present and the answers that we seek are interesting to most people," Hall said.

Some of those answers come in the form of neuroeconomics, which looks at buying decisions, how they are made and how they can be manipulated. Hall said neuroscience often involves the performing arts in its studies.

Religious studies professor Jeff Pugh serves as a member on the advisory committee for the minor. He works closely with another committee member, associate professor of psychology Jeff Gendal, on issues like the existence of free will.

"Everything goes into understanding people and understanding our bodies starts in our brains," Ackerman said. "It makes sense when we're studying the body to start there."